

# Ezekiel 34:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;

## Analysis

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This passage employs the shepherd metaphor to contrast failed human leaders with God as true Shepherd of Israel. Ancient Near Eastern kings commonly used shepherd imagery for their rule; Ezekiel exposes how Israel's leaders failed this calling by exploiting rather than caring for God's flock. From a Reformed perspective, this anticipates Christ as the Good Shepherd (John 10) who lays down His life for the sheep, and calls undershepherds (pastors/elders) to feed and protect God's flock (1 Peter 5:1-4). True shepherds serve the sheep's welfare, not their own interests, demonstrating Christlike servant leadership.

## Historical Context

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This passage was delivered during the Babylonian exile (c. 586-571 BCE) after Jerusalem's destruction. The exiled community grappled with theological and practical questions: Why had judgment come? Would restoration occur? How should they live in exile? The historical context of ancient Near Eastern covenant patterns, conquest and exile practices, and prophetic literature provides essential background. Archaeological discoveries from this period illuminate the exile's realities and the return's historical fulfillment. Yet Ezekiel's prophecies extend

beyond immediate historical context to find fuller realization in Christ and the church, with ultimate consummation in the new creation.

## **Related Passages**

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## **Study Questions**

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1. How does this verse deepen your understanding of God's character, purposes, or ways of working in history?
2. What specific application does this passage call you to make in your current circumstances or spiritual life?
3. How does this Old Testament passage illuminate New Testament teaching about Christ, salvation, or the church?

## Interlinear Text

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חַיִּית	אֶנִּי	נֹאֵם	אֲדֹנָי	יְהוָה	אִם	לֹא	עַן	הֵיוֹת
As I live	H589	saith	the Lord	GOD	H518	H3808	H3282	H1961
H2416		H5002	H136	H3069				
וְצִאֲנִי	לִבִּי	וַתְּהִי־נֶחֱלִי	וְצִאֲנִי	לִאֲכָל־הָ	לֶכֶל			
and my flock	became a prey	H1961	and my flock	became meat	H3605			
H6629	H957		H6629	H402				
חַיִּית	הַשָּׂדֶה	מֵאֵין	כִּעֲוֹ:	וְלֹא	דִרְשׁוּ			
As I live	of the field	H369	because there was no shepherd	H3808	search			
H2416	H7704		H7462		H1875			
כִּעֲוֹ:	אֶת	וְצִאֲנִי	כִּעֲוֹ:					
because there was no shepherd	H853	and my flock	because there was no shepherd					
H7462		H6629	H7462					
כִּעֲוֹ:	אֶת	וְצִאֲנִי	לֹא					
because there was no shepherd	H853	H853	and my flock	H3808				
H7462			H6629					
כִּעֲוֹ:								
because there was no shepherd								
H7462								

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Peter 2:13** (Parallel theme): And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;